



JULIE LASSA

STATE SENATOR

PUBLIC HEARING on Senate Bill 536

Senate Committee on Agriculture and Higher Education

Wednesday, March 17, 2010

10:30 a.m.

400 Southeast

Thank you Chairwoman Vinehout and Committee Members for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of Senate Bill 536.

Senate Bill 536 is an extension of the Buy Local, Buy Wisconsin program designed to increase the availability of healthy, local foods in schools and provide marketing opportunities for local farmers. This legislation connects schools with nearby farms to provide children with locally-produced fresh foods in school meals and snacks, help children develop healthy eating habits, provide nutritional and agricultural education and improve farmers' incomes and direct access to markets.

This bill would also create a Farm-to-School Council within the Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection comprised of an appointed employee from the Department of Public Instruction, the Department of Health Services, and the Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection, as well as farmers, experts in child health, school food service personnel, and other persons with interests in agriculture, nutrition, and education as determined by the Secretary of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection. DATCP and DPI would also administer grants to participating schools giving preference to proposals that are innovative or that provide models that other school districts can adopt.

Schools that commit to purchasing from Wisconsin farms could generate considerable new income that would stay in their communities. Simply buying from local farms helps cycle money through the region. According to the Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection, for a typical community, a dollar spent locally circulates in a local economy 2-3 times before leaving the community. By shifting just 10% of consumer food spending to locally-produced products, consumers will contribute nearly \$2 billion to local communities. Buying food from diverse smaller farms that are locally-rooted will build and strengthen local economies as well as the statewide economy.

Senate Bill 536 is also an excellent opportunity to combat the epidemic of childhood obesity. Obesity is a major risk factor for many serious health conditions, including type 2 diabetes, stroke, heart disease, high blood pressure and certain cancers. According to a report released by

the Trust for America's Health (TFAH) and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation in 2009, 27.9 percent of children in Wisconsin between the ages 10-17 are considered overweight or obese. These individuals are more likely to be obese adults than their peers who maintain a healthy weight. Estimated health care costs attributable to obesity in Wisconsin adults total \$1.5 billion. If obesity continues to climb at its current rate, these costs are projected to quadruple in the next decade.

Simply, farm-to-school is a means for increasing access to healthy foods for children, while helping local farmers. Over 21 other states have already adopted state-level Farm to School policies and Wisconsin should do the same.

I have introduced two amendments to SB 536. Senate Amendment 1 expands the list of local goods to include dairy products. Senate Amendment 2 expands the authority to issue grants to school districts to include the Department of Public Instruction in coordination with the Department of Agriculture, Trade, and Consumer Protection.

This bill is supported by the Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection, the Department of Public Instruction, the American Cancer Society, the American Heart Association, the Michael Fields Agricultural Institute, the School Nutrition Association of Wisconsin, the Wisconsin Association of Local Health Departments and Boards, the Wisconsin Association of School Boards Inc, the Wisconsin Cheese Makers Association, the Wisconsin Dietetic Association Inc, the Wisconsin Farmers Union, the Wisconsin Potato and Vegetable Growers Association and the Wisconsin Public Health Association.

Thank you again for allowing me to provide testimony on SB 536. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.



State of Wisconsin
Jim Doyle, Governor

Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection

Rod Nilsestuen, Secretary

Date: March 17, 2010

To: Distinguished Members of the Senate Committee on Agriculture and Higher Education

From: Lora Klenke, Agricultural Market Development Bureau Director
Teresa Cuperus, Buy Local, Buy Wisconsin Program Manager
Camilla Vargas, AmeriCorps Farm to School Program Manager
Agricultural Market Development Bureau
Division of Agricultural Development, DATCP

RE: Senate Bill 536

Thank you for receiving the Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection's testimony in support of SB536.

Currently, there are numerous programs and initiatives around the state that are building the infrastructure for Farm to School by identifying hurdles and providing innovative solutions.

DATCP administers the Buy Local, Buy Wisconsin program (BLBW), an economic development program passed in Governor Doyle's 2007-09 budget. The program has several key components including a grants program, an advisory group, and many technical assistance projects.

Through the BLBW program, Farm to School hurdles such as food safety and product liability are being addressed. Already this year, the program has conducted more than 10 workshops throughout the state regarding food safety, post-harvest handling, and the business development of local foods.

Additionally, DATCP is working in partnership with the Department of Health Services, the Department of Public Instruction, the University of Wisconsin's Center for Integrated Agricultural Systems, the Research, Education, Action, and Policy food group, and many other organizations to collaborate on farm to school programs. One example of the success of this partnership is the AmeriCorps Farm to School Program.

AmeriCorps Farm to School is a statewide effort supporting ten Wisconsin communities by providing two half-time AmeriCorps members in each community. One member identifies and addresses hurdles facing local food procurement in school districts while building relationships with WI farmers. The other member provides nutrition education to students K-12 by implementing curriculum, which incorporates school gardens, local food tastings and farm field trips. DATCP has submitted an AmeriCorps proposal to continue and expand the program in FY2011.

While these programs have proven their success and have illustrated the impact of farm to school, they have not been able to meet the overwhelming needs on a statewide level.

A statewide Wisconsin farm to school program would provide coordination, improve efficiencies, and allow for networking of innovative ideas. A dedicated state-wide farm to school program would result in a more rapid demonstration and development of innovative approaches to increase local, healthy foods in schools; it would improve children's nutrition, enhance their educational performance, and affect new markets for Wisconsin farmers.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of SB536.

Agriculture generates \$59 billion for Wisconsin

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An equal opportunity employer



AmeriCorps members bring local WI produce into WI schools.
Pictures taken by DATCP AmeriCorps members: Ruth Hilfiker and Kathleen Hein.

2009- 2010 AmeriCorps Farm to School Program Overview

AmeriCorps Farm to School Goal

The AmeriCorps Farm to School program will provide an innovative approach to decreasing childhood obesity by promoting healthy eating habits in students K-12 and increasing access to local foods in schools.

Program Elements:

- Identifies and addresses hurdles facing local food procurement in school districts including: distribution, processing, and pricing while building relationships and supporting WI farmers
- Provides nutrition education for students K-12 by developing and implementing curriculum, wellness plans, school gardens, in class demonstrations and farm field trips
- Hosts ten Farm to School sites with two half time AmeriCorps members engaging their communities in program efforts

Grant Program is made possible by:

- Funding from Serve Wisconsin
 - Serve Wisconsin supports service in Wisconsin primarily by granting AmeriCorps funds through the Corporation for National and Community Service to organizations that involve citizens in service activities that meet human, educational, environmental, public safety, and homeland security needs.
- Program administration from the WI Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP)
- Partnerships with:
 - UW-Madison Center for Integrated Agricultural Systems (UW-CIAS)
 - Research, Education, Action and Policy on Food Group (REAP)
 - WI Department of Health Services (DHS)
 - WI Department of Public Instruction (DPI)
 - Wisconsin Rural Partners (WRP)

For More Information Contact:

Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade & Consumer Protection

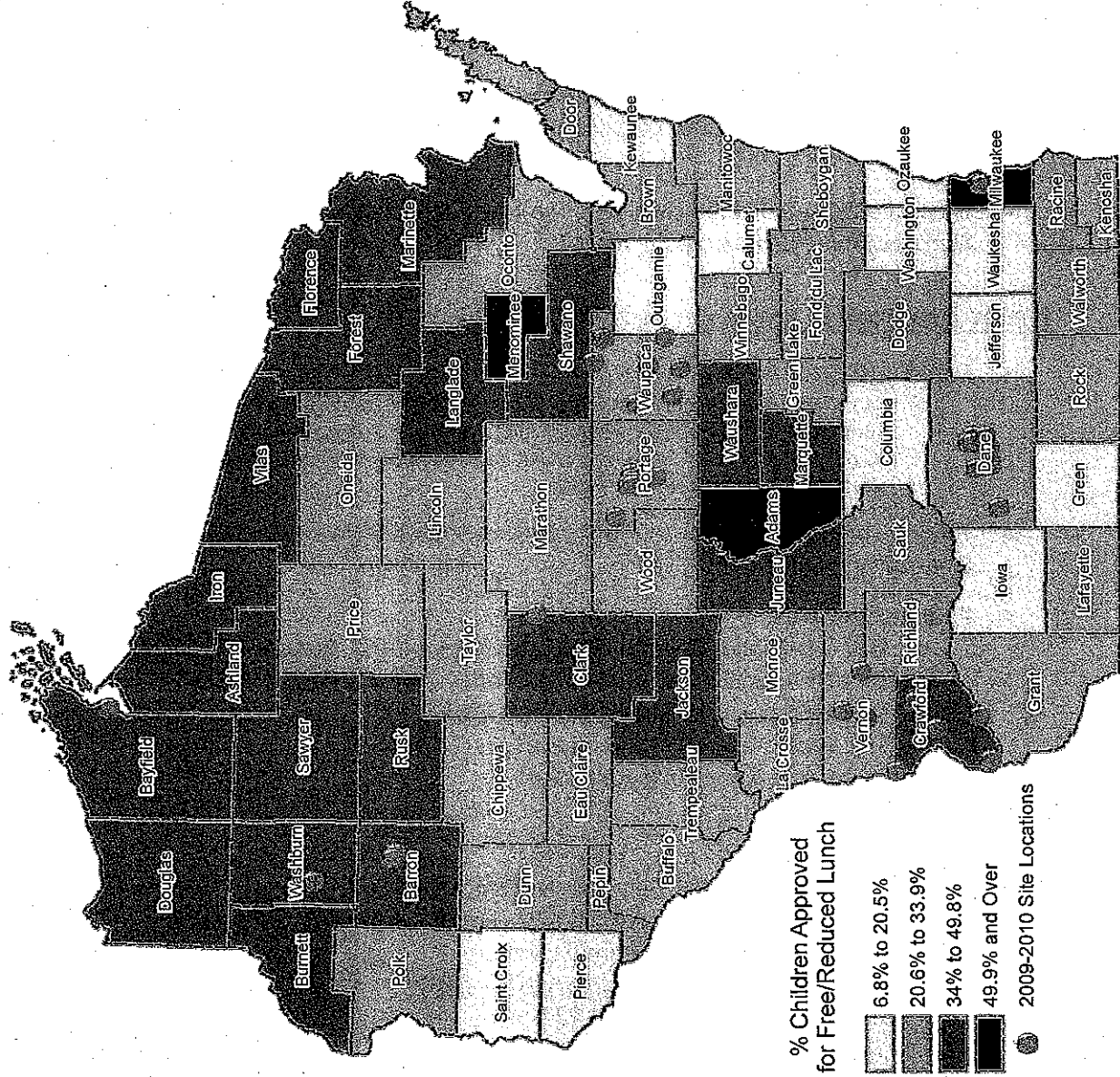
Camilla Vargas

Camilla.Vargas@wi.gov

608-224-5017

2009-2010 AmeriCorps Farm-to-School Sites

Best Site	Schools Served
UW - Extension Crawford County	BA Kennedy Elementary
	Eastview
	Wauzeka Elementary
	Seward Elementary
Washington Elementary School - Bayfield County	Washington School District
REAP/CLAS - Dane County	Talk Elementary School
	Easthome Elementary School
	Lake View Elementary School
	Lincoln Elementary School
	Sterran Middle School
	Cherokee Middle School
	Madison School District - Northside Elementary School
	Monona Grove School District - Winnequah Elementary School
	M. Hersh School District - Primary Center, Intermediate Center, Middle Schools
Spencer School District - Washburn County	Spencer School District
Viroqua School District - Vernon County	Westly School District
	North Crawford School District
	Viroqua School District
	La Farge School District
	DeSoto School District
UW - Extension Waupaca County	Iola-Sandhavia School District
	Clintonville School District
	New London School District
	Waupaca School District
	Marquette - Waupaca Elementary
	Marion School District
	Wega/Princeton - Weyauwega School
West CAP	Barren County School District
	Rice Lake School District
	Colby Elementary School
Colby Elementary School - Clark County	
Michael Fields Ag Institute - Milwaukee County	
Portage County - Stevens Point Area School District	The Academy for Learning and Leadership
	Stevens Point Area Public School District
	Boston School Forest
	Baunoch Elementary School
	Jefferson Elementary School
	Kennedy Elementary School
	Madison Elementary School
	Madill Elementary School
	McKinley Center
	Plover-Willing Elementary School
	Roosevelt IDEA School
	Washington Services Learning Center
	Ben Franklin Jr. High
	P.J. Jacobs Jr. High
	Stevens Point Area Senior High
	Charles F. Hernandez Center for Alternative Learning



March 17, 2010
Senate Committee on Agriculture and Higher Education
Testimony on SB 536

Kim Lapacek
Lapacek's Orchard
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We are a small, family owned and operated orchard with approximately 3,000 apple trees. Our primary market is from the 'roadside stand' we operate off of our farmland. We also sell at farmer's markets in Waunakee, DeForest, and Sun Prairie and at the Produce Auction in Montello.

We started selling our apples to schools in 2007. Waunakee was our first school and we added \$1,600 to our sales in that year.

In 2008, we continued to sell to Waunakee but also added on Poynette, Rio, and Middleton. Our farm to school sales went to just over \$8,000.

We provided apples to Waunakee, Poynette, Rio, Middleton, DeForest, Portage and Montello Schools in 2009. Our sales from these partnerships increased to \$19,000.

We sent out surveys to the kitchen directors at the end of the 2009 apple season. All of the schools reported that kids are enjoying the apples and they have noticed an INCREASE in the quantity of apples they are consuming. One school reported noticing less full apples or apples with just one bite out of them in the trash after lunchtime. I asked about which variety the students liked best – the consensus was ALL of them. (We send approximately 10-15 different varieties to the schools during the season – depending on ripening times, availability, and compatibility.)

Personally, we have noticed an increase in sale as well at the farmer's markets we sell at in the same town as the schools we sell to (Waunakee, Deforest). The students are telling parents about the great apples, the parents realize we are close and they buy from us.

I am a parent of two small girls, 2 and 3. It won't be long before they go to school in the Poynette School District. I can't image that they would eat an apple not from our orchard when we are so close by and willing to work with the schools to make this a successful venture.

March 17, 2010

From: Dillon Grabski
420 College Ave #25
De Pere, WI 54115
Senior at West De Pere High School

To: The Senate Committee on Agriculture and Higher Learning
Madison, WI

Subject: Bill 536

Relating to: Promoting the use of locally grown food in school meals and snacks, and granting rule-making authority.

To the Committee:

My name is Dillon Grabski. I am a senior at West De Pere high school. I am here today to tell you of my experiences on the school lunch line in northeast Wisconsin.

For two years I attended Chilton high school. During that time I purchased breakfast from mobile carts in the halls, and lunch from the school server nearly every day. I loved the food. Please believe me when I say "I loved the food", because honestly I did. The options on the lunch lines were amazing. We had real beef burgers, tasty homemade chili, marinated, grilled chicken breast club sandwiches, and a bevy of fruits and vegetables daily. I never walked away feeling hungry, yet I never felt overstuffed either.

When my family moved and I transferred schools, I was shocked that my new cafeteria had very little fresh produce to choose from, and more so, even less enjoyable lunch options. Gone were the grilled chicken breasts, and in their place...chicken mc nuggets. After my first day at my new school district I did something I never thought I would do. I bought a personal cooler and a refillable water bottle. I began to load the grocery list on the side of the refrigerator with my demands for lunch options. And at the age of sixteen, I started packing a lunch. I have never stopped.

I'm asking that you consider the legislation before you today, and think of students like myself, who have tasted the benefits of local purchasing. And then please think of the students who have yet to see fresh beef, crisp apples, and real potatoes at school for lunch.

Thank you,

Dillon Grabski

**Senate Committee on Agriculture & Higher Education
March 17, 2010**

**Department of Public Instruction
Testimony on 2009 Senate Bill 536**

Thank you to Chairperson Vinehout and members of the committee for the opportunity to testify before you today in support of Senate Bill 536 (SB 536). My name is June Paul. I am the Director of the School Nutrition Team for the Department of Public Instruction (DPI).

The State Superintendent and the staff at the DPI cannot overstate the importance of nutrition, health, and physical education in ensuring that every student has the opportunity to learn healthy habits and carry those habits forward both during and after their formal pre-K-12 education has been completed. Our work to target obesity crosses teams and divisions as we coordinate our efforts in the areas of nutrition, health and wellness, and physical education. The department sees this bill as a critical addition to our efforts as we believe it will lead to more connectivity between schools and nearby farms leading to fresher foods in school meals and snacks and better eating habits by students.

The department would like to thank Senator Lassa and Representative Vruwink for agreeing to sponsor an amendment to the bill to recognize the department's concern with the grant program to school districts. The amendment requires DATCP to coordinate with DPI in awarding grants to school districts. In this way, we can better ensure that we are not duplicating efforts or are at cross-purposes given DPI's responsibilities in this area.

DPI's responsibilities related to school nutrition are broad. The Department provides instructional support to schools in the areas of agriculture education and nutrition. DPI's School Nutrition Team oversees the federal school lunch, special milk, breakfast, after school snack, and fresh fruit and vegetable programs.

The DPI also provides technical assistance and training for food service personnel on school nutrition programs, and we evaluate meals served through the School Meal Initiative Nutrient Analysis (SMI), which is a measure of consistency with the USDA Dietary Guidelines for Americans. This analysis is completed by DPI's Public Health Nutritionists who are Registered Dietitians. Part of the SMI process includes consultative assistance by the Public Health Nutritionists as well as Nutrition Program Consultants to develop improvement plans to meet the nutrition standards.

The department has awarded grants to school districts for the purchase of equipment for food preparation, and we operate distribution warehouses across the state for schools participating in the federal meal programs.

Through the Wisconsin Growers Initiative, DPI and USDA encourage schools to purchase locally grown, unprocessed, agricultural products and we encourage schools to establish a standard process for purchasing foods from local growers.

The department, along with others, also provides access to a local harvest database of local growers. Any individual may search this database by location and food type. The database will list local growers that are willing to provide food to schools. Any local grower may register to participate in this program free of charge by filling out an on-line application.

As you have heard, the department's work in the area of farm to school and school nutrition is extensive. We welcome the bill's formalization of our coordination with other state agencies as amended and are encouraged by the potential for the grants to school districts.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.

March 17, 2010

From: Diane Chapeta
Director of Child Nutrition Services
Chilton & Hilbert Public Schools
Director of the Northeast Wisconsin Farm to School Initiative
530 W Main St
Chilton, WI 53014

To: The Senate Committee on Agriculture and Higher Education
Madison, WI

Subject: Bill 536

Relating to: Promoting the use of locally grown food in school meals and snacks, and granting rule-making authority.

To the Committee:

The Chilton and Hilbert Public School districts have worked for two and a half years to change how we view our children's lunch tray. We began the process by participating in the Farm to School program, as we worked to bring whole foods back to school lunch. Since making those changes our nutritional numbers per meal have improved drastically, while fat and sodium counts continue to drop. I no longer take the time to count servings of fruits and vegetables on the menus per day, per week, or per month. Our program supplies all the fruits and vegetables our students can eat.

This remarkable turn-about in how we feed our students can be credited back to farm to school. To date our small, rural districts purchase locally grown (raised) fruits, vegetables, pastured, grass-fed beef, pork, and cheese from five local farms, and one cheese processor. Our budgets are in the black, and our students are learning, some for the first time, what fresh food actually tastes like. The bulk of our potatoes are rarely in the shape of tots or waffles, and our mashed potatoes no longer come from a can. French fries are now a "treat", served perhaps once or twice a month. Our menus have successfully incorporated fresh, wholesome foods with "kid friendly" cuisine.

We have overcome the difficulties of working within a program with very little infrastructure by tackling one problem at a time. To ensure food safety I visit our farms every year, monitoring conditions. To compensate for varying pack sizes, pricing, and availability I ask for weekly bids during the growing season. And to compensate for higher meat prices our districts cater within our communities raising needed funds.

The communities surrounding our schools are grateful of the support farm to school affords our farm partners, and delighted their children are eating a healthy balance of locally grown foods. School lunch in our area of northeast Wisconsin is no longer a cause for alarm, but a cause for celebration.

Please consider the legislation before you and the impact it may bring to Wisconsin farms and our children.

Thank you,

Diane Chapeta

Thank you for this opportunity to provide written testimony in support of Senate Bill 536. About 2 years ago, group of Crawford County area producers, parents, teachers, food service directors and community members formed Food-4-Thought, a grassroots farm-to-school movement. The goal of Food-4-Thought was to help teach students the path between farm and fork and instill healthy eating habits while supporting the area farmers. Since we started, we have seen results beyond our wildest dreams.

The community came together to:

- Build a school garden at B.A. Kennedy Elementary School in Prairie du Chien
- Provide healthy fresh snacks to the elementary school students twice a week every week throughout the school year
- Provide monthly classroom education and tastings that correspond to a local featured food in the lunchroom
- Source from local farmers

As a result, the students are **taking and eating more fruits and vegetables during lunch**. In February, we received the *Standing Up for Rural Schools, Libraries, and Communities Award* from Tony Evers, State Superintendent.

We have seen a positive change in the students' attitudes, but we didn't anticipate the positive change we have seen in the community. The farm-to-school program has acted like a catalyst for a countywide local foods movement. A group of producers and local food advocates have collaborated to form DRIFTLESS WISCONSIN GROWN (DWG). One of DWG's goals is to work together to expand their market to include schools and institutions. The group has also partnered with Prairie du Chien's Mainstreet Organization to revitalize a downtown farmers market. The Opportunity Center, a work center for people with physical and mental disabilities, has partnered with the City of Prairie du Chien to build a Community Kitchen to help meet the community's economic development goals and to help provide storage and processing for the farm-to-school program.

Please support Senate Bill 536 to help farm-to-school efforts throughout the state. Not only would it be good for our children's health and wellbeing, it would be good for the health and wellbeing our rural communities.

Thank you!

Sincerely,

Kathleen Hein, Mom, educator, and City Council Member

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311 S. Wacouta Ave

Prairie du Chien, WI 53821

Theresa M. Huber

March 17, 2010

1601 Clover Lane

Janesville, WI 53545

(608) 757-0274 (h) or (608) 921-1601 (c)

Good Morning Senators,,

My name is Theresa Huber, I am the Manager of the Janesville and Edgerton Farmers Markets. I am also on the Safe Routes to School Advisory in Janesville. I am a strong advocate for children, farmers and consumers.

I am here today to speak of the importance of Senate Bill 563. As you know this bill requires the Dept of Ag, Trade and Consumer Protection to promote farm to school programs. Passing this bill will have a vast impact on a great many people. First, today's youth are struggling with many health issues that even as of 10 years ago were rare for children. Childhood obesity, diabetes, heart disease and vitamin D deficiency rates are off the charts. Much of this is due to the amount of processed foods (which is inexpensive compared to fresh) that our children are consuming and the amount of physical exercise that they do not get per day. Today's children have a life expectancy shorter than our own. That is greatly disheartening in a time when medical advancement and knowledge is growing at a rapid pace. By feeding our children whole local foods instead of processed foods I do believe that we will see a change for the better in the overall health of our children and thus a decrease in medical costs.

Today's economy makes it very difficult for families to provide a lot of non-processed foods in their daily diet. Produce, meats and dairy are very expensive, especially when compared to processed foods, (whether in a box, can or frozen). In the Janesville School District alone there are 3,717 children who are receiving free school lunches and 636 who are receiving reduced priced lunches. If these children's household incomes are such that they are eligible for free/reduced school lunches, then they are more than likely not seeing much, if any unprocessed food at home either. Fresh produce/better nutrition is essential to better health. I just found out this week that one of our schools, Madison Elementary is applying for a "farms to school" grant. This is great news for those students attending that school.

The flip side of this side of this issue is our local farmers. They struggle to meet ends meet as much as any other low income family. These are hard working families who strive to grow/raise the best farm fresh products that they can. They receive very little appreciation or respect for their contribution to our communities and yet these are the very people who supply every one of us with one of life's basic needs: food. When purchases are made from a local farmer the impact is more than getting better nutrition, it impacts the local economy. Local farmers spend their money in the community in which they live. As good as they are at raising farm fresh product(s), there are many things that they cannot

grow/raise such as car insurance, siding, tractor parts, a meal out. What they cannot grow, they have to buy. And the local farmer is well known for supporting his/her local businesses, thus helping the local economy. It is ecologically friendly to make purchases from the local farmer, the amount of resources NOT expended to ship foods alone is important to note as well as the amount of emissions not being expelled. Buying from our local farmers reduces the carbon foot print we leave. It affects all of us in the community, plus helps everyone to understand that we are all a necessary part of each other's daily lives. Also, when you buy from a local farmer, you are able to ask questions about the foods you are purchasing, as to the growing practices used and how to best prepare the food. You can bet that it was fresh picked at the peak of freshness and handled by one or two people versus 20-30. Food that is shipped 1,500 miles or more is not picked ripe and is treated with chemicals and a wax coating to preserve it for shipping. Getting it from your local farmer is much healthier any way you look at it.

Today's children and farmers deserve so much more than what they are getting and they should be getting to know each other first hand. Knowledge is wealth, good nutrition is necessary and deserved. Each of us needs to remember and respect the fact that good nutrition comes from our farmer's who feed our children, who don't forget are our future. Bill 536 represents what is good about Wisconsin, it represents our dedication to education, to good nutrition for everyone, but most importantly, it represents our dedication to our hard working local farmers and to our children.

I thank you for your time and for your dedication to our children and our local agriculture.

Sincerely,

Theresa M. Huber



*Monique
J. Hooker*

*Culinary Lecturer
Teacher • Author*

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Website:

www.moniquescuisine.com

The Farm to School connections:

- 1) Let schools serve healthy locally grown foods.
- 2) Connect farms, food and nutrition.
- 3) Explore agriculture-based opportunities.

For many children in our communities the school meal is the **best** and often the **only** meal they can count on.

Locally grown food tastes **fresher** and **better** than food that has traveled long distances.

Vibrant local agriculture ensures that Wisconsin farms thrive, and as a consequence that open spaces, rural landscape and strong healthy communities are preserved.

An **enhanced school curriculum** gives students opportunities they would not otherwise have, for example going to local farms, learning about growing food, nutrition and food preparation. With the state of our economy, these can also be survival skills.

A child with these skills and knowledge is more likely to make **healthy behavior** as a life-long practice, and being healthy, not having to depend on health care to sustain herself or himself.

All of us, you and I, are trying to find ways to sustain our farmers and improve our children's health. A healthy diet can slow the increase in child obesity, diabetes and learning disorders. Medication is a poor answer to this epidemic, not to mention excessive drug costs and the spiraling numbers of the uninsured.

We, you and I, have the tools and the know how to help our farms, our schools and our children, and by doing so, prevent the damage that inaction may bring. These children are the ones who will be sitting where you are some day. They may look back to this session, and without knowing your names, thank you nonetheless, for your vision. I think we owe them this.

This act is a big step forward. I ask you, please, to give us the tool we need, **The Farm to School Program**.

Thank you!

Very sincerely submitted,
Monique J. Hooker
Retired Executive Chef
Farm To School Advocate



Center for Integrated Agricultural Systems

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Public Hearing re. 2010 Senate Bill 536 Committee on Agriculture

Comments from Sara Tedeschi

Great Lakes Farm to School Network Coordinator, UW Madison Center for Integrated Agricultural Systems

Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today.

My name is Sara Tedeschi. I coordinate the Great Lakes Farm to School Network as part of a National Network, with the UW-Madison Center for Integrated Agricultural Systems. www.farmtoschool.org

I have been working with farm to school programs in Wisconsin since 2002, and nationally and regionally since 2008. The good news that I am here to report is that farm to school, as a community inspired approach to health and revitalized local economies, is taking off like never before all around the country. For myself and my 10 counterparts across the U.S. comprising the National Farm to School Network, we find that we can only graze the surface in terms of responding to all the interest and inquiries we receive from the local level. However, what is also a positive trend in farm to school growth is the organizing and policy activity at the state level. In my region of the Great Lakes only MI and IL have passed farm to school legislation, however I can say that all other 4 states are in some stage of state level discussions around organizing, policy and most importantly interstate agency cooperation in partnership with community based and stakeholder groups working to increase farm to school activity in their state. Across the nation, the number of states having passed farm to school legislation is 24 and rising.

In the state of Oregon, (a state having passed farm to school legislation twice now), an excellent pilot was done, showing that funds spent by school food programs (one urban one rural) on locally produced foods had a economic multiplier effect of 2:1 in the school's community. These are results that point to potential economic stimulus for our communities that simply can not be overlooked. These results are only the beginning of the long and short term benefits of farm to school. The potential impact on children's immediate health and long term understanding of where their foods comes from and how it affects their health also can not be overlooked. It is our collective responsibility to support our schools to be active agents of change and innovation with farm to school.

State organizing and programming seems to be the current direction for farm to school and it makes all the sense in the world. After all, we are trying to link up WI farms with WI schools to benefit WI children and WI communities. To do this effectively, efficiently and to ensure that we are truly reaching our target goals, it requires our state agencies to work together to: assess needs, develop resources, provide outreach and training, work to minimize unnecessary constraints and provide incentives for rural and urban communities alike to take leadership and an active, creative role in making farm to school work in their locale.

Although I work on these issues nationally, I am a long time WI resident and want to see WI keep step with this positive trend in community wellness and economic growth. WI is a leader in agriculture, a vibrant diversified agriculture. We are positioned incredibly well to be leaders, setting precedent and models for success in farm to school for our region and across the country.

Thank you.

Sara Tedeschi, National Farm to School Network
UW Center for Integrated Agricultural Systems
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CIAS brings people together to study relationships between farming practices, farm profitability, the environment and rural vitality.



March 17, 2010

**Expert Testimony to the Committee on Agriculture,
Wisconsin State Senate Regarding SB536**

I have been a researcher and educator in the field of nutrition for the past ten years. My research is on obesity prevention in children with a focus on improving dietary behaviors and nutrition environments in homes and schools. As a nutritionist, I am concerned with the trends in eating patterns that are negatively affecting the health of children in Wisconsin and across the country. I am pleased to see that the state of Wisconsin is making an important step through Farm to School policy to improve the health and nutrition of children.

As policy makers, I want you to know that Farm to School strategies have the potential to greatly impact both the short- and long-term health of Wisconsin children. In Wisconsin and throughout the nation, childhood obesity and poor nutrition are growing problems that will lead to early development of diabetes, heart disease and other health problems. The fiscal ramification of poor nutrition and obesity is a huge burden. It is estimated that health care costs attributable to obesity among Wisconsin adults amount to \$1.5 billion per year.

Research clearly demonstrates that healthy eating behaviors, including diets high in fruit and vegetables, are related to preventing weight gain, decreasing chronic disease risk, and overall good health. A recent report from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) showed that less than 7% of Wisconsin adolescents (versus 9.5% nation-wide) eat the recommended servings of fruit and vegetables per day. This is very concerning because eating habits and taste preferences are formed in early childhood and become the basis for lifelong eating behaviors. Therefore, programs that support healthy eating early in life, such as Farm to School, are the most important investments we can make for the health of Wisconsin's children.

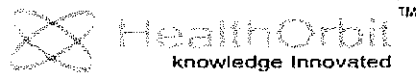
Greater health disparities exist among individuals who are low-income, minority, and who reside in rural areas. Interestingly, new research is showing that individuals who experience greater health disparities also have poorer access to healthy foods. An important aspect of Farm to School programs is that they provide children with access to locally grown fruits, vegetables, and other foods. Research has shown that a major predictor for children's fruit and vegetable intake is simply having access to these foods. Therefore, an important advantage of Farm to School programs to consider is that they could potentially bridge the gap of health disparities that exist among children and families living in Wisconsin by improving access to healthy foods.

Many positive results are being reported from Farm to School programs in Wisconsin and in other states. Increasing amount of data show that fruit and vegetable consumption is increasing and that children are making overall healthier eating choices not only at school, but also at home. Farm to School programs will not only provide benefits of healthy eating that are essential for growth and development, but will also provide other benefits such as student academic success, school-community bonds, and foster local economies.

I urge you to consider the impact Farm to School programs have on the health among children living in Wisconsin as you determine your position on this proposed legislation.

Respectfully submitted by:

Tara L. LaRowe, PhD
Department of Family Medicine
University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health



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University of Michigan
Health System

Children Who Eat School Lunches More Likely To Be Overweight

Findings by University of Michigan Cardiovascular Center show need for initiatives such as Project Healthy Schools, which teaches sixth-graders heart-healthy lifestyles

ATLANTA — Middle school children who regularly eat school lunches are more likely to be overweight or obese, develop poorer eating habits and have high levels of "bad" cholesterol compared to those who bring lunches from home, according to new University of Michigan Health System research presented March 13 at the American College of Cardiology's 59th annual scientific session.

Although previous studies have looked at the nutritional content of school lunches, this is the first study to assess the impact of school lunches on children's eating behaviors and overall health—a critical issue amid skyrocketing rates of childhood overweight and obesity, which can set the stage for future heart disease and premature death.

A team of U-M Cardiovascular Center researchers collected and analyzed health behavior questionnaires completed by 1,297 sixth graders at Michigan public schools over a period of almost three years. They discovered that children who consume school lunches were more likely to be overweight or obese (38.8 percent vs. 24.4 percent) than those who ate lunches brought from home. Children who ate school meals were more than twice as likely to consume fatty meats (25.8 percent vs. 11.4 percent) and sugary drinks (36 percent vs. 14.5 percent), while also eating fewer fruits and vegetables (16.3 percent vs. 91.2 percent).

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HealthDay

News for Healthier Living

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Cutting Salt Could Prevent Almost 500,000 Heart Attacks

Government-industry collaboration would work better than a "salt tax," study finds

By Amanda Gardner
HealthDay Reporter

MONDAY, March 1 (HealthDay News) -- A combined government-industry initiative to reduce U.S. sodium consumption by as little as 10 percent would save thousands of lives and billions of dollars, according to new research.

Cutting salt reduces blood pressure, a key factor contributing to heart attacks and stroke.

"Per person on average it is a very small decrease in blood pressure, but over large populations, we saw a significant reduction in cardiovascular disease and in cost savings," said Dr. Crystal Smith-Spangler, lead author of a study in the March 2 issue of *Annals of Internal Medicine*.

"This new report strongly supports the conclusion that a concerted national effort to reduce sodium in processed foods would save hundreds of thousands of lives at minimal cost," added Dr. Walter Willett, chairman of nutrition and epidemiology at the Harvard School of Public Health in Boston. "We should not delay taking on this challenge."

Like several other recent reports and recommendations, the study advocates a population-based strategy to reduce salt intake and, thereby, blood pressure.

Willett was a co-author of an Institute of Medicine (IOM) report released a week ago urging public-health initiatives to combat salt consumption.

And the New York City Health Department, under Mayor Michael Bloomberg, has announced that it is spearheading the National Salt Reduction Initiative, which aims for a 20 percent reduction in salt consumption over five years.

The initiative is targeted primarily at restaurants and food manufacturers, which supply the majority of sodium in American diets.

According to a commentary in the same issue of the journal, co-authored by Dr. Thomas R. Frieden, director of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, too much salt is responsible for 100,000 deaths each year in the United States.

To estimate the potential lives saved from a reduction in salt intake, the researchers devised computer models assessing the cost-effectiveness of two scenarios.

The first scenario was a government collaboration with the food industry to reduce the amount of sodium in processed foods, similar to an effort undertaken in the United Kingdom that has led to an estimated 9.5 percent decline in overall sodium consumption among its residents.

A similar reduction of 9.5 percent in the United States would prevent 531,885 strokes and 480,358 heart attacks over the lifetime of adults ages 40 to 85, would increase quality-adjusted life years by 2.1 million

and would save \$32.1 billion in medical costs, the authors stated.

The second scenario involved a tax on salt that would increase the price by 40 percent and lower intake by 6 percent. This would prevent an estimated 327,892 strokes and 306,137 heart attacks, save about \$22.4 billion and would increase quality-adjusted life years by 1.3 million.

The first option -- a government/industry united effort -- makes more sense and yielded better results, according to both the study authors and Frieden.

If done slowly, American taste buds might even adjust to the change, according to Dr. David Fleming, chairman of the IOM committee and director of public health for Seattle and King County, Washington. He spoke during a Feb. 22 teleconference on the issue.

"If you look at the experience in other countries, for example, the U.K., which has been a leader in reducing salt, we find that if you drop the amount of salt precipitously, people notice," Fleming said. "But if you drop it slowly over time, months or a year, then nobody notices."

Dr. John Bisognano, a professor of medicine and director of outpatient cardiology at the University of Rochester Medical Center and president of the New York Chapter of the American College of Cardiology, said that "there's a recognition that we're getting salt from processed and restaurant food."

"Even if you're trying your best at home to restrict salt intake, one can of really good soup or one trip to the buffet at a restaurant and you've exceeded the recommendation," Bisognano said.

For people with chronic kidney disease or heart failure, such an unintended spree could also mean a trip to the emergency room, he said.

"Our idea is to create a healthier environment so people, by default, make healthier choices," said Smith-Spangler, who is a health services researcher at the Stanford University Center for Health Policy and a physician with the Veterans Administration Palo Alto Healthcare System. "If manufacturers were able to work with us and decrease sodium in processed food, it would be easier to decrease sodium intake."

More information

The American Heart Association has more on **shaking the salt habit**.

SOURCES: Crystal Smith-Spangler, M.D., health services researcher, Stanford University Center for Health Policy, and physician, Veterans Administration Palo Alto Healthcare System, Palo Alto, Calif.; Walter Willett, M.D., Dr.P.H., Fredrick John Stare professor, epidemiology and nutrition, and chairman, department of nutrition and epidemiology, Harvard School of Public Health, Boston; John Bisognano, M.D., Ph.D., professor, medicine, and director, outpatient cardiology, University of Rochester Medical Center, Rochester, N.Y., and president, New York chapter, American College of Cardiology; Feb. 22, 2010, teleconference with David W. Fleming, M.D., director, public health, Seattle and King County, Washington; March 2, 2010, *Annals of Internal Medicine*

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MICHAEL FIELDS
AGRICULTURAL INSTITUTE



March 17, 2010

To: Chairperson Vinehout and Members of the Senate Committee on Agriculture and Higher Education

From: Bridget Holcomb, Associate Policy Director for Michael Fields Agricultural Institute

Re: Support for SB 536, Farm to School

On behalf of Michael Fields Agricultural Institute, thank you for considering SB 536, Wisconsin's first Farm to School legislation. I urge you to vote yes to help our farmers access a lucrative new market.

Farm to School programs are great for Wisconsin farmers. With these programs, farmers get:

- a guaranteed market from a local buyer
- an alternative to direct marketing and time saved by focusing on one buyer
- farm name recognition and increased sales in other venues
- the chance to feed healthful, local foods to kids, which sometimes includes their own kids!

Do not mistake Farm to School programs for a niche market. Connecting farmers to schools will have a significant impact on our agricultural economy. It is for this reason that groups like the Wisconsin Farmers Union and the Wisconsin Potato and Vegetable Growers Association have signed on in support. In fact, Andy Diercks of the Wisconsin Potato and Vegetable Growers Association says, "There are so many healthy ways to serve potatoes that kids love. We can have an effect on school lunches while building Wisconsin markets for our growers."

Why do we need the state to support Farm to School programs?

- While farmers, schools, students and rural economies benefit from Farm to School programs, there are common obstacles.
- Right now, Wisconsin has a lack of coordinated information and resources, and schools wanting to start Farm to School programs often do not know where to begin.
- By creating the framework to share information, resources and success stories, we can greatly expand Farm to School across the state, making Wisconsin a leader in connecting our schools with our farmers.

The time is right for this bill. We can create new local and regional markets for our farmers while tackling childhood obesity, one of the biggest health threats today. As other states across the country pass Farm to School legislation, providing Wisconsin farmers and schools the tools to create Farm to School programs is a positive step for the state's agriculture.

16 N Carroll St Ste 810, Madison, WI 53703
Phone: 608-256-1859 Bridget@MichaelFieldsAgInst.org



American Heart Association | American Stroke Association

Learn and Live.

you're the cure.

TO: Members of the Senate Committee on Agriculture

FROM: Luke D. Rollins
Sr. Director of State Advocacy
American Heart Association
2850 Dairy Drive, St. 300
Madison, WI 53718
Luke.rollins@heart.org

DATE: March 17, 2010

RE: SB-536 (Farm-2-School)

The American Heart Association would like to thank Chairperson Vinehout and the Senate Committee on Agriculture for this opportunity to express our strong support for SB-536 (farm-2-school).

The prevalence of cardiovascular disease and stroke can be reduced through knowing your numbers, monitoring your cholesterol, not smoking, physical activity and improved nutrition. We as a state are taking a positive step in the fight against cardiovascular diseases and stroke by increasing experience, exposure, and education to fresh fruits and vegetables in our schools.

This farm-2-school initiative is an important step because of the following:

- 25% of Wisconsin high school students are overweight and obese.
- Nearly 30% of two to four year olds participating in the WIC program are overweight or obese.
- 37% of high school students in the Milwaukee Public School District are overweight and obese.
- 43% of two to four year old American Indian children participating in WIC are overweight or obese.
- About 65% of Wisconsin Adults are overweight and obese.
- Cardiovascular diseases are the number one killer in Wisconsin, accounting for 32% of all deaths.
- Stroke is the third leading cause of death and is a leading cause of disability in Wisconsin.

Farm-2-School programs are a win-win for Wisconsin farmers and Wisconsin students. The program helps farmers access new markets for their agricultural products while providing students with healthy fresh fruits and vegetables and other Wisconsin grown food.

-more-

Farm-2-School pilot projects around the state have shown that serving our students locally grown food increases their consumption of fresh fruit and vegetables, both at school and at home, and provides a local market for our farmers.

SB-536 creates the framework for a statewide farm-2-school program by establishing: a statewide Farm-2-School Advisory Council at the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade & Consumer Protection; a statewide Farm-2-School coordinator; and, grant program to assist in the advancement of this worthwhile program. SB-536 has zero appropriations as this point. There The farm-2-school coalition is working with DATCP on funding opportunities.

The mission of the American Heart Association is to build healthier lives free of cardiovascular diseases and stroke. As well, February is heart month. The American Heart Association commends the Senate Committee on Agriculture for making farm-2-school a policy priority for the State of Wisconsin.

March 8, 2010

Dear Senator Kathleen Vinehout (and members of the Senate Committee on Agriculture):

As a farmer, I know you are aware of the local food system where some of your foods are coming from, but many of the families I serve have no connection with the foods they eat.

As a registered dietitian with the Monroe County Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC), I serve families with inconsistent food resources. These vulnerable families benefit from resources and opportunities that provide healthful and safe foods.

Our participants spent \$4,405 in 2009 at our local farmers' markets and farmstands to purchase locally grown fruits, vegetables and herbs with the help of the Farmers' Market Nutrition Program grant dollars our program receives. WIC can only serve children up to the age of 5. Once they turn 5, we hope they are still visiting the local farmers' markets and farmstands, but we have no resources to encourage our families to continue their relationships with local food growers/producers.

As a nation, we are aware that consuming a variety of fruits and vegetables is good for our health, but we continue NOT to eat enough of them. I believe part of the reason we are not eating enough fruits and vegetables is because we need to know more about fruits and vegetables, have them readily available and begin to develop a connection with them by; understanding what they are, where they came from, and what to do with them.

I find that children have an amazing ability to encourage their parents to do what they want AND if we can continue to introduce our kids to the good things fruits and vegetables can do for us then maybe we can have an impact not only on their life, but also on the lives they impact most (their parents, siblings, and later in life, their own children).

Farm to School programs are providing an opportunity for children to have access to local and regional foods that are delivered fresh, safe and close to home. Schools have the opportunity to develop relationships with the farmers growing/producing their foods and both are able to work together to create recipes in the most inviting ways to encourage our children to eat them. Our children are getting opportunities to learn where their foods are coming from and they are getting excited about these foods.

I look forward to the opportunity Farm to School programs provide for our children and as a registered dietitian I am thankful for programs like this that help provide healthful and safe foods in our community.

Sincerely,

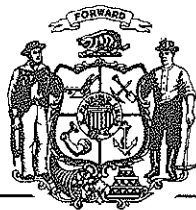
Patricia Hagen M.A.S.L., R.D., C.D.

Monroe County WIC Coordinator/Nutritionist

14301 County Highway B, A-18

Sparta, WI 54656

(608) 269-8671



AMY SUE VRUWINK

STATE REPRESENTATIVE

Public Hearing On Senate Bill 536

Senate Committee on Agriculture and Higher Education
Wednesday, March 17, 2010

Thank you Chairwomen Vinehout and Committee Members for allowing the opportunity to provide testimony in support of Senate Bill 536.

Senate Bill 536 creates the framework for a statewide Farm to School program. It would establish a statewide Farm to School Advisory Council within DATCP and would also create a statewide Farm to School coordinator and grant program to assist in the advancement of this worthwhile program.

Farm-to-School programs are beneficial for Wisconsin's production agriculture and to Wisconsin students. Senate Bill 536 and its Assembly companion Assembly Bill 746 will help our Agriculture producers and provide the opportunity for our farmers to access new markets for their products while providing students with healthy fresh fruits and vegetables and other Wisconsin grown food.

We are all aware how successful the Buy Local Buy Wisconsin program has been, and now we have the ability to provide resources and tools for our local food producers in an effort to expand the local food markets. We in the legislature need to do all we can to promote Agriculture, and find new ways for our producers to be apart of our local and expanded markets.

It is apparent from the Farm-to-School pilot projects that are currently taking place throughout Wisconsin, that serving our school kids locally grown food increases their consumption of fresh fruit and vegetables, both at school and at home, and I believe this legislation will connect our children to agriculture in many ways. When the public hearing took place for Assembly Bill 746 in the Assembly Committee on Agriculture on February 24, 2010, the support from local school districts, school children, and individuals representing production agriculture was tremendous. I am sure that the support for Senate Bill 536 will be just as prevalent.

Again, thank you for allowing me to provide testimony on Senate Bill 536. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions.



March 16, 2010

The Honorable Members of the Senate Committee on Agriculture and Higher Education
Wisconsin State Assembly
Post Office Box 8953
Madison, WI 53708

Dear Chairperson Vinehout and Members,

I am writing to express the American Cancer Society's support of Senate Bill 536, related to promoting the use of locally grown foods in school meals.

Approximately one-third of all cancer deaths are attributable to poor diet, physical inactivity, and overweight and obesity. In addition, there is substantial evidence of the relationship between nutrition and cancer risk. Many epidemiologic studies have shown that populations that eat diets high in vegetables, fruits and whole grains and low in animal fat and red and processed meats have reduced risk of some of the most common cancers. Greater consumption of vegetables and fruits is associated with decreased risk of lung, esophageal, stomach and colorectal cancer. In addition, poor nutrition, including consumption of calorie-dense and high sugar foods and beverages, is a major contributor to obesity.

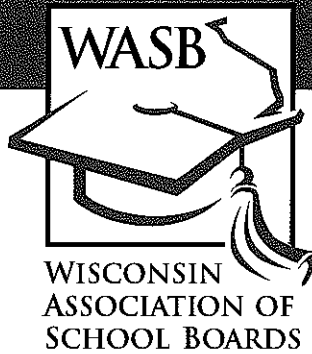
It is essential that healthy eating patterns are established early in childhood. Maintaining healthy eating habits and a healthy weight from childhood through adulthood can substantially reduce an individual's cancer risk. Schools are a critical place to teach children about adopting a healthy diet for life. The Society supports policies that provide quality, affordable nutritious foods in schools and quality, age-appropriate health and physical education to all students.

We recognize that fostering healthy behaviors and removing barriers to healthy eating may be among the most critical actions we can take to promote wellness and reduce the burden of cancer in Wisconsin. The Society supports Senate Bill 536 as a way to promote healthy eating behaviors and increase access to healthy foods in schools and urges you to approve this important legislation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bob Meyer".

Bob Meyer
Wisconsin Government Relations Director



122 W. WASHINGTON AVENUE, MADISON, WI 53703
PHONE: 608-257-2622 • FAX: 608-257-8386

JOHN H. ASHLEY, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

To: Members, Senate Committee on Agriculture and Higher Education

From: Dan Rossmiller, WASB Director of Government Relations

RE: Senate Bill 536, relating to: promoting the use of locally grown food in school meals and snacks (Farm to School).

Date: March 17, 2010

The Wisconsin Association of School Boards **supports** Senate Bill 536, the "Farm to School" bill, and efforts to promote the use of locally grown food in school meals and snacks. We urge the Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) to include school board members as members of the farm-to-school council established by Senate Bill 536.

In these tough economic times one way for school districts to support their local constituents while obtaining value is by purchasing locally wherever possible. School boards understand that supporting local constituents as those local constituents support the school district can create a "win-win" scenario for all involved.

Many Wisconsin school districts already have in place local purchasing policies and procedures that ensure opportunity for local vendors. Senate Bill 536 encourages this approach with respect to locally grown food and will build upon progress already occurring in this area.

A growing number of Wisconsin school districts are becoming involved in the Farm to School Program, purchasing fresh fruits, vegetables and other food items from local growers and producers. Some of the benefits of Farm to School Programs include: bringing whole foods back into lunch programs, increasing nutritional values; promoting proper nutrition and healthy eating; reconnecting students to the food cycle by introducing them to local agriculture; and providing support for local the farm economy. Further, buying seasonally can allow the purchase of foods at the peak of production and at the best price.

However, establishing and maintaining successful "Farm to School" programs can require a great deal of work. Senate Bill 536 provides a mix of financial incentives, information and training to enable such programs to expand and to serve as models for others.

Districts with successful local food purchasing programs suggest that some of the key elements to success include:

- Obtaining the commitment of the school food service manager, the food service staff and the administration and the support of the school board;
- Deciding how and when to start a program. This includes knowing both financial limits and the limits of staff with regard to labor and time management. Generally, districts should initially buy only what meets their requirements and fits within their budgets. Many districts start small, choosing one or two items (such as apples or potatoes) to begin with;
- Finding interested growers and producers in the area, communicating with them and, where needed, offering training. Related activities include:
 - Visiting and inspecting vendor farm sites for safe and unsafe farming and pest management practices to ensure food safety.
 - Agreeing on pertinent issues, such as: delivery terms, payment terms and expectations, weekly pricing and availability, etc., and writing up purchasing agreements are all important. (Availability of the producer and the farm or facility for school educational program activities is also something to be worked out.)
 - Working out production schedules.
- Planning school menus to utilize locally purchased foods;
- Promoting the program by involving the students, staff and community;
- Following up on purchases and reviewing what worked well, what maybe didn't work well and how improvements can be made, which might include finding funds to expand the program;
- Contacting growers and producers at the end of the season to review the previous season and plan for the next season.

By establishing a program through which DATCP will provide grants to school districts, nonprofit organizations, and others for the creation and expansion of farm to school programs, Senate Bill 536 will encourage more school districts to develop and implement farm-to school programs.

School board members appreciate that this bill provides incentives rather than mandates for school boards. Encouraging (rather than binding) districts to purchase from local growers and producers is an approach that preserves local control and flexibility to meet the needs of both growers and producers and our schools.

As stewards of taxpayer dollars, school board members recognize that all purchasing decisions, whether buying locally or from elsewhere, should be based on reasonable business judgment and the best interests of the district. We again urge the DATCP to include school board members as members of the farm-to-school council established by Senate Bill 536.